

Dragon of War

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Summary: Kratos, the former God of War, is already having a tough day with trying to kill Zeus. What would happen when his journey is interrupted by a scrawny Viking and his Night Fury? Can he still bring himself to do his mission, even while Hiccup reminds him of the daughter he himself killed all those years ago?

1. Chapter 1

****Author's Note:** Yes, I know. Another story that popped into my head that just wouldn't leave. I am a huge fan of the God of War games, and I thought it would be interesting to see what would happen when Hiccup and Toothless meet a warrior more ferocious than any Viking on Berk.**

****This story will be taking place after the Poseidon battle in God of War 3, right when Kratos is confronting Zeus. If you want to see it in movie form, go to You Tube and watch the game cut scenes.****

* * *

><p>Chapter 1: After the battle<p>

"The hands of death could not defeat me... the sisters of fate could not hold me... and you will live to see the end of this day!" Kratos brandished the blades of Athena. "I WILL HAVE MY REVENGE!"

"Petulant child! I will tolerate your insolence NO MORE!"

With that, the King of Olympus leapt high into the air, lightning crackling in the clouds while Kratos watched in anger. The mother of the Titans, Gaia, looked on, determined to carry out her main goal: killing Zeus.

The clouds shifted in the sky, moving down with the tip that was slowly descending towards the statue of Zeus. Out of the tip, came

the king of Olympus, who had one hand raised that gathered electricity from the forces of nature under his control. He landed on the statue's head, before cutting off the siphoning of energy and holding a very powerful bolt of lightning that crackled with lethal intent.

Gaia had raised her hand and was bringing it forward to grab Zeus, but the god simply raised the bolt over his head and threw it at his son with a grunt of effort.

Both Kratos and Gaia were blown back by the giant explosion that resulted when it hit the ground, destroying the platform that the former god of war was standing on and damaging Gaia's arm in the process. The Titan screamed in shock and pain while Kratos was sent careening towards the bottom of Olympus.

* * *

><p>"Hold Toothless." Hiccup said quickly, holding his breath in order to be as quiet as possible. Toothless, did the same, turning his ears to concentrate on the signal needed for them to pull their trick off. That had one chance at this, and if they missed it by even a second, then Hiccup's tribe and the dragons' fate would be doomed.<p>

Hiccup's eyes snapped open at the hissing sound of gas of the Red Death's incoming fire.

"NOW!" he shouted. At his rider's shout, the Night Fury turned around and shot a bolt of blue fire into the Red Death's mouth, erupting the gas prematurely and causing the humongous dragon to roar in intense pain as her throat burned from the fire in her.

The dragon queen's eyes widened when she saw the ground, realizing that at her current speed, she would crash into it with enough force to injure or even kill her.

The dragon raised her wings to slow her landing, but years of disuse combined with the damage done by the human brat and the traitorous Night Fury rendered them as fragile as paper. They tore from the immense pressure of the wind, rendering her only hope of surviving the fall useless. She roared in fear and despair, not even noticing as the duo pulled back and went past her falling bulk. The last thing she ever saw just before her skull smashed against the island was a flash of golden light. Then everything went black for her.

Meanwhile, with Toothless and Hiccup, the duo were trying to outfly the fire of the Red Death's explosion, yet at the most pivotal moment, the tail-fin burned away, leaving the two helpless as the tail came down towards them.

"No... NO!" Hiccup managed to yell just before the tail hit them. The Viking was knocked unconscious and fell off the disoriented dragon, who flapped his wings in a desperate attempt to reach his falling rider. With one last thrust of his wings, the Night Fury pushed past the air and rushed to his human friend, opening his wings wide enough to envelop him just as the flames surrounded them both.

Just before Toothless passed out, he felt a warm, tingling feeling

surround his body just before a flash of yellow light obscured his vision. Then everything went black.

(A little while later...)

"Hiccup!" Stoic shouted, running into the ash-ridden area near the Queen dragon's corpse and searching desperately for his son. "Hiccup!" He shouted again, turning his head left and right for any sign of the boy or his dragon.

"Stoic!" came Gobber's voice. The Viking chief turned his head to look at his life-long friend, who stared back at him with a sad expression on his face while holding something in his hands. Stoic slowly walked closer, eyes kept steadfastly on the object while his whole body trembled.

He had only managed to take a few more steps before collapsing to his knees, sobbing loudly as Gobber silently cried as well, holding the burnt leather saddle and the barely recognizable pair of blackened clothing.

"My s-son..." Stoic manage to say through his sobs, reaching out and grabbing the burnt brown leather vest that his son always wore. He buried his face in the article of clothing. "I-I'm sorry..."

* * *

><p>"Gaia! I can hold on no longer!" yelled Kratos, desperately trying to keep a grip on the Titan, but losing to the forces of gravity.<p>

"If I help you, we will both fall! Even now, Zeus gains!" Gaia responded, using her arm to reach up and grab the side of the mountain. Her left arm was almost severed, revealing the green flesh-like tendrils underneath the tree-bark skin she had. The movement of her body caused Kratos to lose grip once again, making him resort to pulling out the Blade of Olympus and pushing it into Gaia's back.

"The destruction of Zeus...is why you saved me from death!" He shouted, sliding down the Titan's back with the sword.

"I saved you to serve the Titans!" Gaia corrected, desperately attempted to keep her grip on the mountain despite her broken arm.

"DO NOT DENY ME MY REVENGE!" the former god of war shouted angrily.

The Titan's expression became annoyed. Finally managing to get a handle on the mountain, she pulled herself upwards just before she answered. "Listen carefully Kratos... you were a simple pawn, nothing more! Zeus is no longer your concern! _This is our war, not yours_!"

With that, the Titan punctuated the end of her sentence by slamming her hand down on the mountain. The resulting earthquake made the Blade of Olympus dislodge itself from her body, as well as Kratos.

"GAIAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!" The Spartan shouted helplessly as he fell deep into the abyss that was the Underworld.

Gaia continued to climb, but then the clouds up in the sky caught her attention, making her pause. She took on a defensive stance, thinking Zeus was readying another attack. The clouds crackled with electricity, becoming wild and uncontrollable. Then, to Gaia's confusion and surprise, a ball of lightning fell out of the sky and flew past her, down to the bottom of the abyss where Kratos had gone.

The Titan watched the spot where the strange ball had disappeared, but then pushed her curiosity away and continued to climb.

* * *

><p>"I have lived...as a warrior..."

I have died...as a god..."

"Having suffered the ultimate sacrifice...I have been denied release..."

"I..."

"I will defeat Olympus..."

"I will have MY REVENGE!"

* * *

><p>"Raaaaaaaaaaaaaagh! OOF!"<p>

Kratos yelled just before landing in the River Styx. He'd manage to survive the fall by landing in the water, only getting a couple of bruises and one broken arm. With exhaustion and pain overtaking his body, the Spartan knew that he had to make it to dry land. He began to swim through the water, but was attacked by the squid demons that resided within the river. He pushed through the pain and fought them off, but every attempt of fighting only bought him a few more seconds of time before he was again overcome by the monsters.

Kratos finally made it to a stone ramp that led out of the water. Limping and holding his broken arm, the ghost of Sparta slowly made his way up into the Realm of Hades.

He walked a few more paces on the platform he was now standing on, before stopping and taking a deep breath.

"We...are not finished Zeus. The realms of Hades...have never held me!" Kratos yelled out at the sky. He glared angrily at the path in front of him.

"Death cannot hold those with purpose, Spartan." came an almost angelic tone. Kratos looked around in surprise at the familiar voice, then turned around to face the green ghostly image of Athena.

"Athena..." He breathed.

The dead goddess of wisdom smirked at Kratos, then went back her original neutral expression. "I have missed you, Spartan." She said, her words sounding like they were passing through water. The warrior stared back, speechless at how the female could still be alive. After all, he had killed her earlier that day, so that she was talking to him here was very jarring.

"I-I don't-" he stammered.

"My sacrifice to save Zeus has brought me to a higher existence." The ghost explained. Kratos simply stared.

"You still seem to be an Olympian." He noted suspiciously.

Athena smiled. "Appearances can be deceiving-"

The Spartan creased his brow. "So can the children of Olympus!" He declared, turning his back on the god, distrust and malice dripping in his sentence.

"Perhaps." Athena said, reaching an arm out to Kratos's shoulder. "But remember, my death came by your blade."

The Spartan threw off her hand and turned around to face her. "My blade...was meant for Zeus." he stated irritably. Athena waved her arm dismissively.

"Kratos, as we speak, the war between the Titans and gods continues, and mankind suffers." The goddess pointed her hand at the various falling humans around them, all screaming in horror as their bodies fell into the underworld. The spartan regarded them for a second before sneering.

"Let them suffer. The death of Zeus is all that matters." He said coldly.

Athena sighed, not at all surprised by the warrior's reaction. "Zeus will not fall as easily as Ares. To destroy the king of the Gods, you must attack that which gives him his strength." The ghost curled her hand into a fist as she floated in front of Kratos.

"The Flame of Olympus."

Kratos looked at Athena, confused.

"You once gave your life to save Zeus, and now you seek to destroy him?" he wondered out loud, glaring at Athena while crossing his arms. "What has brought about this change?" he asked suspiciously.

To Kratos's shock, Athena floated closer, hand reaching towards his chest. Before he could react, the goddess's hand actually went through his chest, without any pain or sign that it was there.

"I see truths where I did not before." Athena said as she grabbed ahold of the damaged Blades of Chaos. Due to Kratos's earlier fight with the souls in the river, they had deteriorated to the point of uselessness, nothing more than rusted and brittle blades. The goddess floated through the Spartan, who examined his chest to make sure he was alright. Once he was satisfied, the warrior turned around and

watched as Athena engulfed the blades in green fire with a wave of her hand.

"Perhaps these will earn back your trust."

The fire Athena had conjured slowly dissipated and left two undamaged yet different-looking pair of blades in its place.

"These are the Blades of Exile, Kratos." she explained. The weapons glowed a bright orange, gleaming in the light of the underworld sun. "They will help you in your quest to kill Zeus." Tossing them to the Spartan, he looked them over, finding them not too different from the weapons he had earlier.

"What is this?" Athena asked out loud, turning her head to the side where the River Styx was. Kratos followed her gaze to the river, taking up both blades in hand and getting into a battle stance, gritting his teeth while crouching. However, his rage-filled countenance slowly turned into one of confusion when he saw a bright orb of light coming down. It let several sparks of lightning, coming down with the speed of a falling boulder.

"Move Spartan!" Athena shouted, disappearing from sight right before the orb crashed into the platform upon which they were standing. Kratos was thrown back by the force of the resulting explosion, his sight blinded by the yellow light. He landed on his back, grunting once before flipping over and getting back on his feet. Getting back into a battle stance, Kratos pulled the blades from his back and waited for an assault.

Once the light cleared however, the Spartan's eyes widened at the sight before him.

"By Athena...what trickery is this?"

The sight that lay before the ghost of Sparta was one that he'd never seen: In the middle of the small crater where the orb of lightning had landed, there lay a black lizard-like demon. Normally, Kratos would have taken the opportunity to kill potential threats, but that wasn't what stilled his blade.

What stopped him was the child the lay in front of the beast's chest.

2. Chapter 2

Chapter 2: Casualty of War

****Author's Note: Please don't hate me for this chapter.****

* * *

><p>Toothless's eyes slowly fluttered open, exhausted after having to save his rider from death in the Red Death's flames. A glaring light obscured his vision, and he groaned from all the burns and cuts on his body from the fall. While his eyes adjusted to the light, the Night Fury looked down at his chest and found that he had indeed saved Hiccup from the flames. The dragon let out a relieved sound that was a mix between a sigh and a moan gripping his rider closer to

his body.<p>

The Night Fury smiled, happy that both him and Hiccup had accomplished what the dragons had believed to be impossible. Who would ever believe that the dragon queen was killed by one Night Fury allied with the scrawniest Viking in the world?

His rider was unconscious, yet if the dragon was not feeling the beat of Hiccup's heart against his chest, it would have been easy to assume that he was dead by how pale he looked. The light between the dragon's semi-closed wings was unusually bright. Confused, the dragon lifted his head from between his wings and squinted his green eyes a few times before finally observing his surroundings.

Toothless's heart dropped like a stone. The area around him and his rider was like something out of a nightmare. Now that he was actually paying attention, he could hear the terrified screams of humans as he watched them tumble out of the thick grey clouds up above and fall past the rock ledge he was on. The dragon looked on, horrified that they were in a place where humans were dropping like rain.

The dragon was so preoccupied, he almost didn't hear the familiar sound of a human sword being unsheathed. Toothless turned his head in the direction his body was lying in... and saw a fierce-looking human with the palest skin he'd ever seen. The human was glaring at him hatefully while brandishing two short, yet sharp swords (were they glowing?) that revealed his obvious intent...

He was going to attack Toothless.

"Wretched beast!" shouted the man, "Demon of Zeus! Go back to your master and leave the child!"

Toothless growled, baring his teeth. He instinctively tucked Hiccup's body against his chest harder, which turned out to be the wrong thing to do as Hiccup opened his eyes wide and screamed in agony. The suddenness of his rider's action made Toothless leap to his feet, startled.

The dragon's sporadic movement set off a warning within Kratos, who ran forward, blades raised above his head. Letting out a grunt of effort, the Spartan brought them down towards the dragon's head. Toothless, startled at the offensive attack, dashed out of the way, grabbing his rider with his sheathed mouth and moving them closer towards the ledge.

Clang! the metal ground echoed from the impact of the Spartan's blades. They were imbedded up to the hilt, while Kratos gave off an almost animal-like growl of frustration.

Toothless set his rider down gently yet quickly, now seeing that the reason Hiccup had screamed in pain was because his right leg was mangled up to the knee, leaving patches of pants hanging over bloody flesh. The dragon whined concernedly, but then focused his attention on the human in front of him. The pale warrior had taken his blades out of the ground, brandishing them yet again.

"I say yet again beast, LEAVE THE CHI-"

The Night Fury, eyes narrowed and sick of this human's shouting, sent

out a blast of fire that hit the ground in front of Kratos, cutting off the warrior and sending him flying into the rock wall. Toothless smirked as he heard the satisfying crunch of a body crashing into the cliff. The human would most likely be injured or possibly dead, but that was what he got for threatening an experienced dragon.

Turning back to his now-unconscious rider, Toothless frowned at the mangled leg. The flesh was burnt to the point that the raw part underneath the skin was showing, and splotches of dried blood were all over the place. Whining in concern, the Night Fury walked closer to check the damage, but then froze as he heard a grunt behind him. Then a metallic, rattling sound made itself known, almost as if the human was messing around with some chains.

The dragon spun around, barely dodging the blade that had been thrown towards his head. Toothless spun to the side, away from his rider, but almost fell off the narrow ledge of the cliff. There wasn't a lot of room here, since the pathway was partly destroyed, leaving a crater across the middle of an area that was only about six-feet wide. Toothless struggled to keep his wide body on.

Looking up, the dragon was utterly shocked to find that not only was the pale man completely unscathed from the explosion, but the short blades he was holding were connecting by chains that were wrapped around both the handles and the arms of the man. Not only that, but the blade the man had thrown had instantly retracted back into his grip. Toothless stared in awe.

"I will not ask again." the human threatened, his eyes showing nothing but pure hatred for the Night Fury. "LEAVE!"

Toothless growled, but this time there was a distinct tone of nervousness. The man seemed totally unaffected by the blast of the fireball. Even if he had escaped unharmed, he should have at least been knocked out from the force of impact. This realization made the Night Fury hesitate, which was just the moment the Spartan needed to begin his attack.

Kratos sprinted forward, bringing both weapons to his side and pointing them downwards. Toothless, caught completely by surprise at the human's speed, tried to dodge, but the weapons suddenly extended out of the human's grip, being linked by chains wrapped around his wrists and flying upwards.

Toothless screeched in agony as the blades went upwards into the undersides of his wings. They sliced right into the base, sticking where they were and causing droplets of blood to splatter all over the floor. Kratos smirked sadistically at the pain the dragon was in before grabbing the chains in his arms and forcing them upwards, grunting from the weight.

Toothless roared as his body was lifted into the air by the base of his wings, the human's weapons imbedded deep enough to stay inside and causing even more blood to spill out. With a yell of effort, the Spartan brought the dragon over his head and slammed him down on the other side of the walkway. A pained wail went out as almost every bone in Toothless's body was broken by the impact.

Kratos sneered. The demon was either immensely foolish or incredibly weak to have been this easy to put down, especially considering how

his weapons weren't even at one-fifth of their normal power. He pulled out both of the blades from the creature, who yelped as the swords tore away at his scales and flesh.

The Spartan frowned, putting the Blades of Exile on his back and walked forward towards the downed dragon. Toothless, meanwhile, whimpered pathetically, rendered completely immobile from the human's attack.

The Night Fury's eyes stared forward at the approaching human. As the man walked forward to the helpless dragon, Toothless set his gaze on Hiccup, who lay flat on the floor, still unconscious from his injured leg.

The dragon's eyes began to glaze with tears. Here they both were, in this apocalyptic world of humans that were dropping like flies out of the sky, and here he was at this murderous human's feet unable to protect his rider.

Toothless felt his ears being grabbed, then his head was painfully forced up to face the man, who glowered down at the dragon angrily.

"I told you to leave the child you worthless beast."

A growl escaped Toothless at the man's statement, but it devolved into a yelp of surprise when then man released the dragon's ears. Toothless's head slammed back down onto the metal floor, disorienting him and preventing him from noticing how Kratos went behind him and stretched out both arms to his sides.

Kicking down Toothless's head to the floor, the Spartan brought both outstretched arms around the dragon's head and began to pull back. He wrapped his legs around the Night Fury's upper body to steady himself as he pulled even harder.

Realizing what the man was doing, Toothless panicked. He flailed his arms, thrashed around while roaring fearfully for his life.

Kratos merely shrugged off the demon's struggle for survival. After all he'd been through that day, this beast's pathetic attempts at throwing him off were trivial. Tightening his grip, the Spartan let out a yell of effort at the same time that Toothless gave a screech that started off low, then increased in pitch as his head was pulled even further.

"RAAAAAAAAAAAAAAGH!"

"ScreeeeeeeeeeEEEEEECH!"

Crack!

SNAP!

Then there was silence, broken only by the heavy breathing of Kratos. Satisfied, he let the beast's head go, making it slide down to the ground with a *thump!*

The Night Fury's lifeless eyes stared unseeing at his rider, the

green-slitted orbs forever robbed of the joy he had experienced with Hiccup.

3. Chapter 3

Dragon of War Chapter 3: Death and Sibling Rivalry

****Author's Note:** I know I pissed off a lot of people with what happened last chapter, but I do have a very good reason for doing so. And while this chapter is shorter than I would like, I think I got its point across. Enjoy.**

* * *

><p>There was only darkness, and it was blinding.

He felt pain, and he felt nothing.

There was no sound, only silence.

There was no scent, yet it was everywhere.

The taste of blood came with every breath he took.

He was all of it, yet none.

...

****"What is this?"****

* * *

><p>Kratos kicked at the beast's corpse. Seeing that it was no longer a threat, the Spartan put his foot on the chest of the body and began pushing with all his might. It took a few seconds, but eventually, the body went tumbling over the side of the walkway, disappearing into the cloudy abyss below.<p>

"You've done well, Spartan." came Athena's voice from behind Kratos. She had apparently just come back to witness his disposal of the dragon creature.

"I did what needed to be done." The warrior stated simply, before turning to face the still-unconscious child behind him. He went forward and bent down to look at the boy's injured leg.

"Athena, can you take care of him?" Asked the Spartan in a rare tone of sentimentality.

Athena gave Kratos a glare. "Do not let your heart get in the way of what needs to be done Spartan."

Kratos turned and returned her glare with a stone, cold gaze. "I won't. But I will not leave this child unless you take him somewhere safe." He said defiantly toward the former Olympian.

The ghost continued to glare at the stubborn warrior until she gave a sigh of submission. "Very well, Spartan. But once I heal him, he will be your responsibility."

With that, Athena extended her hand, which glowed with green energy. Hiccup's body became surrounded in the same energy before lifting into the air. He came by the ghost's side, head limping as he floated.

"I will take him to the Labyrinth. He will be safe there." She said to Kratos before a large light began to engulf her and the unconscious Viking.

"Remember Kratos," She warned, "as long as Zeus reigns, there is no hope for mankind. Destroy the Flame of Olympus, and the very foundations of Olympus itself will crumble." That was the last thing she said before both her and the boy she was carrying vanished in a flash of green light.

Kratos thought over her words for a minute before turning towards the cliff. There was another platform across the way and a running start would be needed to get to it.

* * *

><p>Zeus sat on his throne, a frown set on his face. He could feel the tremors of the battle below, and each one made the room shake, causing more rubble to fall in front of him.<p>

The King of Olympus was thinking about how it had all come to this. He had ensured that the prophecy would never come to fruition, yet here he was, waiting for his son, who foolishly thought he could kill him. The monarch slammed his fist down on the throne in frustration, sparks of electricity surrounding his hand.

How could it have come to this?! He had everything under control, but his son had gone and started what was now the Second Great War between the gods and the titans. If it hadn't been for the Sisters of Fate being too inept at stopping Kratos from changing his fate, the mortal would be dead and everything would have turned back to what it was before Athena had idiotically made the Ghost of Sparta the god of war. And his brother Poseidon would still be alive, along with the majority of humanity.

"Something must be done." He said to himself, standing up on his throne. "I will wipe out this plague of a son myself, and nothing will stand in my way!"

Then, to Zeus's surprise, the floor in front of him cracked open, revealing a black hole of smoke and wailing dead arms that reached for anything to drag. But they were ignored as a fellow Olympian jumped out of it.

Hades, God of the Underworld, roared in triumph, brandishing his claws and having them swirl around his body in unison before bringing them back to his side. He breathed hard through the metal mask he was wearing, fire and smoke coming out of the facial plates.

Zeus glared at Hades in annoyance. "What is it, brother?" He demanded. "You should down there handling the Titans! OLYMPUS MUST BE DEFENDED!" The king punctuated his shout by turning around and throwing a bolt of lightning at the throne, which exploded into nothingness.

The Underworld god did nothing but wait for his brother to stop his bout of rage before letting out a deep, demonic-sounding laugh.

"Impatient as always, dear brother." He said. "I have come bearing something I think may interest you."

"And what could be so important that you would abandon your duties?!" Zeus yelled, arms crackling with electricity in his anger.

Whether or not Hades was intimidated by his brother was impossible to determine, but the god's laughter this time around seemed a little more subdued. Brandishing his claws, the God brought them together before quickly embedding them into the ground. The claws scratched along the marble floor, opening a large black portal in the ground that grew wider as Hades spread them farther away from one another.

The hands of the underworld came out once again. Only this time, rather than trying to find anything to bring down, they seemed to be lifting something up.

Zeus relaxed somewhat, his arms no longer covered in electricity. His anger gave way towards confusion as the hands pushed up what seemed to be a dragon-like creature out of the depths of the underworld before tossing it at his feet. From the way the creature's neck was angled, it was clear that it was dead.

"I was sending out my troops to defend Olympus," Hades hissed through his helmet, "when I sensed something that wasn't man or demon enter my realm. I found this corpse not long after."

Zeus's confused expression became one of irritation.

"Why should I care about whether a creature of yours is dead or not? Their goal should be protecting Olympus, and I do not care if they must die to so."

Hades laughed another demonic laugh, like his brother had said something very amusing. "But this creature is not of my creations brother. And if you were to look into this one's mind, like I have, then you would also see that it is not even of this world."

The king of the gods became intrigued at this revelation. Looking down at the body once again, he could now see that the dragon-like corpse lacked many of the visible signs of belonging to the underworld. The corpse's wide dead eyes were a regular green, not like a shade's, which had white, milky orbs because of their association with death. There was also evidence of it being alive earlier, since, besides the cracked neck, there was no evidence of decay on the body. It seemed freshly killed, not just killed again.

"I see now that this beast is not of your realm Hades, but what you said earlier confounds me. Just what do you mean by 'not of this world?'" Zeus asked suspiciously.

Hades said nothing, but instead went and stood over the corpse. Placing one hand on its head, he held out the other towards

Zeus.

"Let me show you." He hissed.

Zeus walked forward, eyes half-lidded in suspicion. If Hades considered this important enough to personally share minds in between himself, then this deserved attention. However, if this was all an elaborate hoax, he would deal with Hades after he had killed Kratos.

Grasping his brother's hand, Zeus closed his eyes...

...and was instantly bombarded with a series of highlighted events of the creature's life from its perspective.

He saw the small, thin barrier of an egg being broken and heard the cry of an infant just before it was lifted by two older dragons.

He saw the tip of a cliff just before the sight of the rocks in the ocean below started coming closer.

He saw an enormous dragon roaring inside of a giant dead volcano ordering an army of dragons to get food for her.

He saw an attack on an island that was inhabited by a large group of humans that, despite their roughness, looked incredibly stupid and narrow-minded, rushing in to attack the dragon just before they imploded from the blast of a fireball.

He saw a pair of ropes with two metal balls wrapping around the dragon's body just as it flew over to attack, landing down in the forest not long after. A screech of pain followed.

He saw a young, extremely weak-looking child lifting a knife above the trapped dragon's head and closing his eyes. The boy hesitated for a moment as he stared down at his victim just before the dragon's eyes closed.

He saw that the same boy was now making some sort of saddle for the dragon, which soon became a scene of the boy flying on top of the dragon while dodging through pillars of rock in their way.

The rest of the visions in Zeus's mind told a lot about what happened. Apparently, whoever this mortal boy was, he and the dragon had become allies and had gone against the boy's people to help the other humans. It eventually became one long vision of a great battle between the giant dragon and the duo, who had barely managed to escape the explosion of her body before being knocked down by the dragon's tail. The creature had attempted to save the boy from the flames before they were engulfed by a strange orb of energy that had come out of nowhere.

Zeus frowned. Why would Hades waste his time trying to show him this creature's life if it-

Then he saw why.

Kratos, his son, was now fighting the creature head-on, and from the looks of it, he had easily incapacitated the dragon. The view focused on the boy, who seemed unconscious and severely injured. The last

thing he saw was his son's enraged face before everything went dark in the dragon's mind, followed only by a loud snapping sound.

Zeus opened his eyes, wrenching his hand away from Hades, who stood and awaited his brother's response. The king of the gods meanwhile, stared at the dragon's body, thinking over everything he had just saw...

...before bursting into deep, uproarious laughter.

4. Chapter 4

Chapter 4: Awakening Within the Cage

****Author's Note:** Sorry yet again for the incredibly long wait. College and other priorities have been propping up everywhere. Here's another chapter where we meet another character. If the description doesn't help, look her up on Google.**

* * *

><p>Hiccup awoke to the sound of crackling fire and an eerie blue light dancing along the edges of his closed eyelids. He groaned in exhaustion, head aching from the impact of the dragon queen's tail.<p>

His eyes shot open as the memory of what happened before he went unconscious came back to him. Shooting himself up from the floor, he attempted to call out for his friend, oblivious to his surroundings.

"Toothle-ACK!" He shouted in pain as his head collided with something on top of him. Whatever he had hit, it was apparently alive, as he hear another yelp.

"Ow! Watch it!" moaned the blurry figure in front of him.

Hiccup blinked several times as his vision began to come back into focus. He could see now that he was inside a cage, and the light was coming from a stand in the middle of the cage. On top of the stand was a bowl of fire, but the strangest thing about the fire was that it was blue, almost like it had been Toothless's fireball that had set it alight.

"Toothless!" He said to himself, looking around in the cage for any sign of his friend. But the cage was far too small for dragon to fit in. Desperate, the boy turned back to the figure, who stared at back at him confusedly.

The figure in question turned out to be a girl, slightly older than him with short white-brown hair that was wrapped in a bun and hanging slightly over her forehead. Her clothes were tattered-looking, almost like they hadn't been changed in a while. They were white, blue, and brown, consisting of ragged ends that hung out of the otherwise consistent wrappings around her body. From how pale she looked, it seemed as though this girl had not seen daylight for a long time.

"Hey!" exclaimed the girl, annoyed at how Hiccup was gawking at her

and moving to the opposite side of the cage, sitting beside the stand holding up the odd-colored fire. "Don't look at me like I'm some object for you to observe. I get enough of that from the gods." she said bitterly.

Hiccup blinked, before shaking his head out of the perpetual confusion of his situation. Here he was, trapped in a cage with a girl, with his friend and fellow Vikings nowhere to be found, and he had no idea how he'd gotten here. He was so confused he completely overlooked what she had said in her last sentence.

Clearing his throat, Hiccup decided that it was best to try to get along with this girl to figure out how he got here and, most importantly, where Toothless was.

"Ummm..." he began nervously, trying to ignore the girl's suspicious glare. "Uh, I-I mean hello! My name is Hiccup. What's-"

Hiccup paused, feeling a weird sensation in his leg. Pushing himself up, he brought his back to the rounded bars of the cage and looked down at his feet, eyes widening at the multitude of bandages around his left leg. Bringing down his hand, the Viking slowly put his arm down on it, which turned out to be a mistake as a hiss of pain left him upon contact.

The girl, who was watching Hiccup as he noticed his bandaged leg, sighed. "You were in a very bad state when Athena brought you in here, so she did what she could to heal your leg and allowed me to bandage the rest."

Hiccup turned back to her, his expression confused. "My leg was hurt? I survived? But what happened to Berk? Where are the others? Did we kill the dragon queen? And where's Toothless?! And who's this Athena you mentioned?! Who are you?! WHERE AM I?!" he asked frantically, voice rising until he was literally shouting, but from the way he was pushing his upper body forward towards the girl, it caused him to apply weight on the appendage, making him cry out in pain, tears building up from the sting.

The girl, who had been looking more uncomfortable with each question thrown at her by Hiccup, widened in eyes in concern. Getting up from her crouched position, she leapt the short length it took to get to Hiccup and landed at his side, shocking the Viking at just how quick she was.

"Please," She said, calm but firm, "you need to relax Hiccup. I know you are scared for yourself and your friends, but right now, your leg is in a very sensitive state. I will answer any questions you may have to the best of my knowledge, but you need to trust me and hope for the best." she grabbed Hiccup's right hand and held it in both her own, looking at him with her grey-brown eyes intensely.

Hiccup was left speechless, his mind screaming at him to get away lest Astrid find him now this close to another female other than Tuffnut, but on the other hand, from how concerned this girl seemed to be about his health, she looked as though she really was trustworthy and sincere. So the only thing he could say to her response was a simple, yet humbled "Okay."

"Good." the girl said, "And for the future, or what's left of it

after the war, you may call me Pandora. Now let's have a look at-

"Whoa! Time out!" Hiccup yelled, throwing his arms up and pushing her back, face displaying shock at the newly christened Pandora's words. "What do you mean the war?! We killed the queen dragon! The dragons are harmless! I mean, they're still dangerous, but not to us if we just- what the heck is going on?! Why am I in this cage?! Where's my dad?! WHAT HAPPENED TO BERK?! WHAT HAPPENED TO MY FRIEND TOOTHLESS?!"

SMACK!

Hiccup's head was sent reeling to the side, his cheek throbbing from the force of Pandora's slap. Her face displayed a sharp, pointed look of anger, but her eyes betrayed a sad regretfulness at her action.

"Hiccup," she began, sympathy layered every word, even as she brought up the Viking's shocked face by placing her hand on his cheek. "I know that this may come as a shock, but whatever this 'Berk,' 'dragon queen,' or 'Toothless' you are referring to is something I know nothing about. Before I was put here, my father taught me all the names of the lands, and while I have been here a long time, I cannot recall Berk as being among the thousand cities in Olympus or any other part of the world. Therefore, whatever place you are thinking of... does not exist."

Hiccup's jaw dropped. Not just from what Pandora had said, but her head-turning slap had forced him to look through the bars of the cage, allowing him to see that the cage he was in was not only surrounded by a vast empty cavern, but also the humongous chains the size of a grown Viking holding up even more humongous box-like structures that hung from the ceiling, which he could not see. It was almost like being in the mountain of dragons again, only much more grandeur.

"I'm sorry that I slapped you, but you have to remain calm. I wish I could tell you what happened to your people, but I do not know."

Hiccup stared at her for a long time with wide eyes, mouth opening and closing like a fish due to the millions of questions he so desperately wanted to ask her, yet knew he had to be patient. Then after several minutes, he finally lowered his head in submission and sighed before looking back up to her.

"At least tell me you know where my friend Toothless is. Please." He pleaded, tears beginning to building around the rims of his eyes, desperate hope present in every syllable.

Pandora sighed heavily, regretting what her answer would be.

"I'm afraid I do not know who this 'Toothless' friend of yours is. Was he your brother?"

"He's my friend." Hiccup said, voice beginning to break. "We had just brought down the queen...and then...we were flying away from the flames...a-and then the tail-fin broke off just as her t-t-tail came toward us. Then the last thing I remember was everything going dark

before...before...-

The combined feelings of confusion, anxiety, and fear in Hiccup finally let loose itself when the boy completely broke down and began to sob, deep heavy breaths escaping him as scared tears made their way down his face. Pandora frowned, letting go of Hiccup's hand and moving closer towards him, raising her arms and wrapping them around the crying teen in an attempt to comfort.

Hiccup gasped at the unexpected contact, nearly wanting to push her away out of instinct, but when he realized that she was hugging him, he broke down again and hugged her back, crying hard.

"I j-just want to g-go huh-ho-home." He sobbed in-between every deep breath.

"Me too, Hiccup." she responded, patting the Viking's back. "Me too."

As the two continued to hug one another, neither of them noticed Athena floating above the cage, watching intently with a stoic gaze. She brought a ghostly hand up to her chin in thought for a moment, before slowly fading into nothingness.

* * *

><p>Hiccup had eventually stopped crying, but remained depressed about being in a cage without any knowledge of where Toothless or anyone else was for that matter. However, he was also bewildered at the fact that Pandora, who was looking out on the other side of the cage, had little knowledge of Berk, despite it being infamous for its dragon attacks.<p>

His thoughts were interrupted as a low grumbling came from his stomach. He wrapped an arm around his midsection, realizing that he had not eaten since the morning he had been forced to fight the Nightmare.

"Pandora?" He called. "When is whoever is keeping us here gonna come feed us? I'm starving."

"No one ever comes." She responded sadly, not bothering to even look at the Viking.

Hiccup stared back at her with a surprised look, before a nervous chuckle left him. "Heh heh...you-you're joking right? Of course someone has to come here. I mean, how long have been here anyways?"

Pandora turned to face Hiccup, her expression serious. "About several centuries." she answered simply.

Hiccup looked at her for a few more seconds, his face frozen in shock at the implications of her words, before erupting into spontaneous laughter.

"Ah ha ha ha ha ha! Oh ha ha ha ha ha ha ha! You- ha ha! really had me going there for a second. I mean, you look a little older than my age, and I'm only sixteen." He stated light-heartedly.

Hiccup's smile slowly deflated when the look on Pandora's face showed that she wasn't joking, nor did she seem the list bit amused that Hiccup thought she was joking. She didn't look angry, but her expression was one of impatiently waiting for someone to stop laughing so they could get on with the serious stuff.

"I'm serious Hiccup. I've been here in the Labryinth for several hundred years, while my father is trapped down in the Underworld, probably going mad without me to comfort him."

Hiccup frowned at the terms she used. "Wait. Labryinth? Underworld? What in Thor's name are you talking about?"

Pandora looked equally as confused. "You mean you've never heard of the legend of the Great War?" she asked.

"If you're referring to the war between Berk and the dragons, then yeah. Otherwise, I'm completely lost about how you can call it great, because let me assure you, it wasn't." Hiccup responded dully.

Pandora turned around to face Hiccup fully, scratching her head in bewilderment. "How can you not know about the most dangerous war between the Gods and the Titans?"

Before Hiccup could answer and ask what she was talking about, a strange phantom-sounding voice sounded all throughout the cage.

"He doesn't know Pandora, because he is not of this world."

"Who said that?!" exclaimed Hiccup, frightened out of his wits from the voice that seemed to be coming from nowhere and everywhere at the same time.

"Athena? Is that you?" Pandora seemed to call out to no one in particular. "He's woken up, but I think he may have some sort of memory loss of something. And what do you mean by not of this world? Does that mean he belongs in another realm, like the Underworld?"

"No." responded Athena, becoming visible near the locked entrance of the cage. The gate was held together by a glowing blue diamond the size of a sword, so it was virtually impossible to open. Athena flowed right through the bars, coming toward Pandora and Hiccup. "What I mean is-"

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAGH!" Hiccup screamed, horrified at the appearance of a ghost. "PANDORA! GET AWAY FROM THAT THING! HELP! GHOST!" The Viking turned around and began to frantically try and fit his way out of the thin bars of the cage, hindered by the pain in his leg and the fact that the bars were too close together for him to fit through.

Athena and Pandora just watched, the former showing a gaze of indifference toward Hiccup's antics while amusement danced along the edges of Pandora's. Once the boy realized he was thoroughly trapped with the ghost, he turned around, flattening himself against the bars so hard that they were beginning to hurt. The pain in his leg was excruciating, but he ignored it due to the overwhelming fear he was feeling.

Athena turned and began to float toward the Viking, who backed away along the edges of the bars in an attempt to distance himself.

"Do-don't c-come any closer!" Hiccup pleaded, holding himself up on the bars behind him to lift some of the weight off his leg. Athena ignored him, coming ever so closer with her hand outstretched towards him.

"You are in pain Hiccup. It would be wise to sit down." She said calmly, her voice sounding distorted and more creepy to Hiccup's ears. But from how she looked, it was hard for the Viking to do what she was suggesting.

"I said, stay back!" Hiccup yelled. Unfortunately, he wasn't paying enough attention to how he was positioning his feet underneath him, and ended up smacking his right leg into his bandaged leg. Shouting out in pain, Hiccup fell to the floor, eyes squeezed shut while he hissed through his teeth to keep himself from crying.

"Will you let me help you, Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third?"

Hiccup's eyes shot open. He looked up at the ghost, frightened at how intimidating she looked standing over him, despite the hand she had extended out for him to grab.

"How do you know my name?" He questioned, backing away from her on all fours, until his side hit the bars.

"I know many things about you Hiccup, but mainly that you are not in your place of time, or even your plane of existence." She answered sagely. Her face was completely emotionless in all this, giving no sign of what she was thinking or feeling in this situation.

"Why should- URGH!- I trust you?!" He asked defiantly.

Athena fixed her cold gaze on the Viking, who felt a shiver run up his spine.

"Because if you let me help you, I will tell you why you are here, and most importantly, where your companion is."

That changed everything for the Viking. Rather than back away, he instead lunged forward towards the ghost, reaching out to grasp her hand, but due to his quickness, the goddess did not have time to solidify herself to allow him to grab her. Hiccup yelped in surprise as he went through the ghost, crashing down on the floor in a tumble.

"Hiccup!" Pandora yelled in concern, rubbing forward and dropping down next to him as the Viking pushed himself up on his elbows and groaned.

"How about next time, you tell me when you actually are a ghost?" Hiccup asked Athena sarcastically. The goddess did not reply. Pandora, realizing Hiccup was okay, got up and walked back over to the bars of the cage, crossing her arms and watching intently to see what would happen.

Shaking his head clear of any more distractions, Hiccup faced the goddess.

"Where is Toothless? And where am I for that matter? I'm tired of not knowing what's going on, so you better have some answers for me, you-you ghost... thing." He said, pointing at Athena accusingly.

"Which would you like me to answer first?" Athena asked, seeming not to care about Hiccup's weak threat.

"Okay. First off... where is Toothless? He's a dragon, about as big as a small boat, has black scales, and-"

"A missing tail-fin?" Interrupted Athena. Her eyes became half-lidded.

"Wha- ye-YES!" Hiccup yelled, smiling hopefully and staggering up carefully to his feet. "Do you know where he is? Oh thank Thor, I was so worried. Where is he now?"

Athena drew herself up to her fullest height, taking a deep breath and brushing a ghostly hand through her hair as she sighed heavily. She looked away the ground for a moment before turning back to the hopeful Viking.

"He is dead, Hiccup."

5. Chapter 5

Dragon of War ch 5

Kratos grabbed the large hammer away from the giant Stone Talos, raising it and smashing it sideways into the creatures face, while also knocking away the Olympus Sentries that had been summoned out of the ground to combat him. Bringing it upwards, the Spartan brought it down on the head of the statue immobilizing it again and knocking the undead soldiers off their feet. Finally, he made a 360 degree turn with the hammer, building up momentum before releasing it into the Stone Talos's body, pulverizing the statue and putting it down for good.

The Sentries that were left all rushed toward him at the same time, intending to overwhelm him with sheer numbers, but using up what was left of his magic, Kratos summoned the spirits of his fallen Spartan warriors to surround him and impale the rest of the enemies with their spears.

The Spartan sighed in exhaustion. He'd been fighting wave after wave of enemies in his way, but he needed to make it out of the Underworld soon if he wanted to combat Zeus. Clenching his fists tightly, Kratos ran toward the edge of a broken stairway before extending the Wings of Icarus. He floated down near the other side at the end of the gorge, where there was also a chest full of Athena's orbs.

Grabbing the stone lid of the chest, Kratos grunted once before forcing it open, allowing the green orbs to escape and flow into him, healing his injuries and making him less fatigued.

Kratos then went down the pathway, where a split wall made its way down to an underground path of molten lava. Fortunately, most of the lava had hardened into a solid path, so he jumped down from the platform he was on and landed safely. To the Spartan's dismay, the way he wanted to go was blocked by a large thick gate, too hard for him to simply smash through with his blades, even though they had grown considerably more powerful with every battle.

Turning the other direction, the Spartan ran up the narrowing path to see if there was a lever that controlled the gate. To his surprise though, he found at the end of the path was a large platform, and at the edge of it was the giant smith-god Hephaestus.

Kratos rolled his eyes at the pathetic whimpering sight, as the god's back was turned to him, obviously in the middle of mourning or some other irrational misery. He walked up the god, who turned his head slightly at the sound of Kratos's footsteps, flinching visibly from each step.

"Leave me be!" The god whined, not bothering to look around at whoever was behind him. "I tell you... I have paid the price."

"Calm yourself smith-god!"

Hephaestus perked up his head slightly at Kratos's shout, before finally turning around to face the Spartan.

"Ghost of Sparta?" He inquired, turning his gigantic body around. He remained permanently crouched due to how big he was, yet was able to freely move his arms and head around the empty dome of rock carved out for his body.

"Well, well, well..." Hephaestus said out loud, tapping his huge ring finger on the platform Kratos was standing on with a thoughtful look. He suddenly lurched forward, expression serious.

"I thought Zeus would have killed you by now!" he exclaimed, his face only a couple of feet away from the Spartan, who remained unmoved or even intimidated.

"I thought you would have escaped this cavern by now." Kratos responded smartly.

Hephaestus smiled, chuckling lightly at the demigod's little quip. "Zeus may have imprisoned me here," the smith-god suddenly leaned close to Kratos, face grim. "but you are the reason I live in torment."

"I have done you no wrong Hephaestus!" Kratos exclaimed, jabbing a finger at the god that was fifty times his size. "I pursue only one Olympian."

Hephaestus rolled his eyes. "Well, as long as it's only one Olympian." He chuckled, fiddling around with a stone in his hands. Raising the sharp end of his working tool, the god began to work lazily on it.

Kratos looked to the left, seeing a large doorway with Hades symbol on it at the other end.

"I seek the Flame of Olympus, Hephaestus. Do you know of it?" He asked.

The smith-god paused for a second, frowning. "For what purpose Spartan?" He inquired.

"For the purpose I have chosen!" The Spartan yelled impatiently. "Now tell me, do you know of the Flame?"

Hephaestus slowly went on with his work, sighing heavily. "All true children of Olympus know of it." He explained. "We have all come to respect its power. But do not be fooled by its enticing glow." there was a silence that lasted for a couple of seconds before Hephaestus continued. "Neither god nor man can touch its lethal flame."

Kratos clenched his fist determinedly. "I only need to find it."

The smith-god smiled, going back to his earlier work on the rock. "If you can find your way out of the Underworld, I'm pretty sure you can find your way to the Flame of Olympus." He chuckled.

Kratos shook his head in response, turning away and walking towards the lever near the other side of the wall. Grasping it with both hands, the Spartan pulled with all his might until it fell in the other direction. On the bottom of the stone pathway he had come up from, the large gate lowered into the ground, leading into another hallway.

Kratos nodded in satisfaction, walking away from the busily working god while also rolling his eyes.

"You have been truly helpful. Hephaestus." He said sarcastically.

The smith-god raised his head at the Spartan's words, frowning again before sighing and returning to his work, hammering away at the rock a little harder than before.

* * *

><p>He was still floating in darkness, unable to escape.<p>

How long had it been? Minutes? Months? Years?

Maybe decades?

Where was he? The lingering thought on his mind was that of a loud crack before everything became what it was now: Nothingness and darkness both at the same time.

Suddenly, there was a small, almost unnoticeable bit of light at the end of the darkness. Curious, the one without identity or memory attempted to float toward it. If he listened intently, he could hear the cry of something unknown, yet strangely familiar.

"Too...ess!" the light seemed to call. Intrigued even more by this new phenomenon, he began to float even faster towards the thin speck of light, becoming more visible the closer he got.

Then, just as he felt he was halfway to actually seeing the light up close, something stopped him in his tracks against his will, like an invisible wall had been put between him and the light.

***"He is nothing."** came another voice, this one loud and booming. It seemed to shudder the darkness all around him, and the light became blurrier in the distance.

The confused one stopped in his movements, even more bewildered at how the voice seemed to come from nowhere. Then again, everything was nothing here, so why should he care?

***"Your old life is done with. It is time to surrender."** The booming voice seemed to command, the darkness giving away to slight cracks of blue light, along with flashes of lightning.

He began to become frightened, the presence of the louder voice beginning to drown out the cries of the lower one. He saw that the light he'd seen earlier was becoming more and more faint as the atmosphere of the darkness became that of dark clouds and thunderstorms.

***"Surrender to your new life. Forget about him. He is nothing."** The louder voice said, now coming from every direction and completely overtaking the faint whisper from the bit of light.

He was beginning to become scared, the presence of the booming voice seeming to compress all around him. At the same time, the sliver of light in the barely visible distance had darkened almost to the point of nonexistence.

***"You work for me now, dragon."**

Dragon? The term sounded familiar. He was a dragon? Now that he thought about it, he did remember something about being a dragon. But his head was really fuzzy after that loud snapping noise just before everything went-

***"You can have purpose, young one."** The loud voice said. ***"You need only to surrender yourself to the darkness around you."**

The dragon (as he now knew himself as) perked his head. Purpose? By giving in to the complete blackness all around him? Then again, he had been floating around here for a while after waking up. Or did he fall asleep? Nothing made sense to the creature here, but what he did know was that he did not have a purpose floating around here.

Should he consider the offer that this voice was offering him? But what about that whispering light he saw earlier? What was all that about?

***"Let the darkness inside you, little one,"** The voice boomed again. ***"and you shall have a greater purpose than this pathetic existence."** Lighting and thunder flashed all around the dragon, frightening him into curling in on himself.

The dragon paused for a long time, before reluctantly nodding his head at whatever force was talking to him. As much as he would want to know what that tiny sliver of light was earlier, it was probably better to have another life than the one he was already in.

The voice suddenly began to chuckle, before erupting into a loud deep-throated laugh that echoed throughout the darkness.

And that was the last thing the dragon heard before his mind and body was overcome with agonizing pain. He let out the first sound he had ever made since he'd awakened in this black void: a drawn-out ear-piercing screech.

* * *

><p>Zeus held out his hands over the dead Night Fury's body, wearing a sadistic smirk as electricity shot its way out of his fingers. The body writhed and spasmed violently beneath him as arcs of blue lightning danced across the air and into the dragon.<p>

Hades, meanwhile, was on the opposite side of the body, chanting in an odd language known only to himself. He had his claws raised above his head in an X position, purple flames spiraling up in the air and rising higher the more he chanted.

Then, the two gods both yelled out in effort as they brought down their powers simultaneously into the dragon's body. Zeus's fists slammed down on the Night Fury at the same time Hades imbedded his claws into it.

The top of Mount Olympus was engulfed in a combination of light, heat, and energy that imploded in on itself. The entire mountain literally shook at the amount of power that it was forced to endure, so hard that it made several Titans almost lose their footing on the mountain.

Zeus and Hades were blown onto their backs by the resulting explosion. The Night Fury's body was surrounded by an orb that crackled with electricity, and was filled with black haze. The King of the Gods watched in anticipation. Whatever was in the orb of energy was writhing around almost as if fighting to get out.

The two gods slowly got to their feet, watching as the orb continued to pulse ominously.

"Did it work?" Zeus asked Hades,

***"Our ritual was successful brother."** Hades responded. ***"However, now it is up to the creature to decide whether it will survive. It must go through the pain that life offers before accepting the body that will be his."** answered Hades.

"And his mind?" Zeus questioned

Beneath the fiery, metal mask of Hades, a smirk formed on the god's face.

***"He will be indebted to you brother, and his past will never matter to him again."**

* * *

><p>The dragon continued screeching in agony, jerking his body in every direction as flames and lightning crackled all over his body.

The liquid in his body felt as though it was at boiling point, while his skin felt like every inch of it was being cut open by a red-hot knife.<p>

But all of that was little more than a tap on the shoulder compared to what was happening to the dragon's mind. His head felt like it was splitting open as a series of images forcibly passed through his head, each one making less sense than the next.

Who were these two black dragons licking at him with their tongues? Why were the rocks at the bottom of the cliffs coming up to meet him? Why was he suddenly seeing the vast expanse of the night sky filled with small dots of light and a large white round orb? What was this hellish-looking area that had a monster coming out of the lava at the bottom just before it consumed a two-headed creature?

And most confusing of all... Who was this strange creature that was trapped under what seemed to be his paw and looking at him with an undeniably fearful expression?

"Toothless..."

The dragon, in spite of the pain he was in, managed to focus his attention on that voice. It sounded so familiar, yet was completely alien to him. Why was that?

Then the pain, which had subsided for a moment, decided to return full force. And whatever images and voices that had passed through the dragon's brain was overshadowed by the excruciating pain of the dragon's body as its muscles grew and its missing tail-fin snapped into existence. The dragon jerked in place, foaming at the mouth as its eyes rolled to the back of its head and began to leak blood.

The claws on the dragon's legs became longer and sharper. Its mouth coughed up blood as his teeth grew thicker. His nose pushed out even further from its face while the flaps around his skull were replaced by the bone and black hair that jutted out of its head. The tips of his wings extended even further out, breaking through the tips and making its wings look like skeletal hands with webbing in-between them. They moved down the dragon's back and merged painfully with its forearms, jutting out of its shoulders. The creature's hindquarters mutated as well, its rear legs slowly gaining mass as its paws became wide with muscle and bone. The feet grew longer as well, becoming more digitigrade like that mammal's.

The creature's scales became denser, fusing together into a thick, armor-like plating across its back. They layered themselves down the spine until they reached the tail, leading down the extension. By then, the creature's back resembled the carapace of a cockroach, continuing down to the tip of the only thing that remotely resembled the dragon's former body.

The tail of the creature was the part that was the most horrific. Each of the two tail-fins on each side of the tip fused together into a clumped mess of flesh, bone, and scales, looking more like an infected tumor at the end of the tail than anything else. Tiny, oily hairs sprouted from the lump, while the end of it grew a curved hook that dripped with a green, dangerous-looking substance. The spine of the creature stiffened in a circular angle, bending backwards until it literally hung over the former dragon's back, similar to a

scorpion's. A few drops of the green liquid splattered onto the creature's scaly armor-plating, hissing and bubbling like acid.

By the end of the whole ordeal, there was nothing resembling the dragon's former shape. Instead, there lay an almost complete monster on the floor surrounded by the slowly dissipating orb of energy. And as the pupils of the once-dragon's eyes slowly misted over with mind-altering whiteness, the transformation completed itself into a creature that had long been extinct from the world of man. There was no longer anything left, physically or mentally, of the dragon it had once been. Instead, there was now the Manticore.

Zeus and Hades both smirked as they looked upon their work, which itself snarled at the presence of these two unfamiliar men. It sprang at the two with lethal intent, but a lift of a hand from Zeus stilled it in place. It was almost instinctual really, and the newly-made Manticore growled dangerously at the unwilling action.

"You are my pet now." Zeus announced boldly, walking towards the Manticore. "And it is your duty to protect Olympus."

The creature snarled. It understood the man's words, but did not want to follow his orders, yet even as the man came closer, it felt a nudge in its mind that forced it to sit on its hind legs and bow, allowing Zeus's shadow to fall over it.

"But first, you will have to prove that not only to me, but for yourself."

The Manticore hissed in response.

"You will not defy me!" Zeus shouted, curling his hand into a fist before bringing it down hard onto the creature's forehead. The beast roared in pain as a combination of physical force and electrical shock struck its forehead, leaving a bloody gash over its eyes and causing it to whimper pitifully, realizing that this man was indeed his master. It bowed lower, hoping to appease the man as to not get struck again.

"Know your place, you worthless beast! I am your savior! Were it not for me, you would be dead! Left to rot down in the pits of the Underworld." Zeus spat.

Hades, who had been watching the confrontation between his brother and the creature, felt a warning presence in his head. Apparently, something was disturbing the entrance of his dead wife's tomb. Clenching the clawed weapons in his hands and growling, the god of the underworld ran toward the ledge of the cliff, leaping off with a yell of effort before disappearing into the deep battle below.

Zeus barely registered that his brother had left, instead focusing solely on the whimpering Manticore.

"You were killed by the warrior Kratos." Zeus explained. The Manticore looked up at him wide-eyed, shocked that it could have been killed, yet it was here now, alive. It felt a surge of anger toward the name Kratos for some reason, but it couldn't figure out why. Regardless, the Manticore perked its ears up and began to actually listen to what this man had to say.

Seeing that the creature was now showing interest, the king of Olympus sneered. "And I have brought you back to life not only to defend Olympus, but so you may have your revenge on my son."

Zeus crossed his arms, an evil smile making its way across his face.

"What do you think?" He asked.

The Manticore stared up at Zeus for several long moments. Then, to the god's surprise, its lips curled up on each side of its mouth. The beast slowly, yet awkwardly, formed something that the god did not know it could do until that very moment...

...a smirk.

End
file.